

**ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION**

The invention provides a method of identifying a T cell receptor (TCR) variable (V) gene expressed by target T cells in an individual. The method is practiced  
5 by determining expression of one or more TCR V genes by activated T cells from the individual, and determining regulatory activity elicited in response to one or more TCR V peptides by T cells from the individual. A TCR V gene that is preferentially expressed, whose  
10 corresponding TCR V peptide elicits low T cell regulatory activity, is identified as a V gene expressed by target T cells.